

Communicating PARCC Assessment Results to Families

The PASS model refers to the term "parent" as any adult who plays an important role in a child's family life.

The sample reports in this document have been shaped by feedback from parents and are aligned with those that parents will receive on the score report regarding their own child's learning. The samples and explanations in this document have been selected from two highly respected resources – Achieve.org and PARCC. Achieve.org is a national organization devoted to improving the rigor and clarity of standard-setting and testing, as well as other priority education issues. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states that work together to develop and refine current assessment tools that measure student learning of the Common Core Standards.

Partnerships of Parents and Educators: Communication about Assessment Results

This document contains information about sample student assessment reports to enhance understanding about how to effectively communicate assessment results among teachers, school leaders, parents and older students.

Scores on this year's first round of tests will look different from those on previous state assessments. There may be a temptation to compare results on this year's test with previous state tests, but it is important to remember that New Jersey and most other states are now using new, higher standards and assessing students in a new way. This first year of PARCC administration may reflect lower scores than parents, students and educators have come to expect.

Some parents, students and educators may not be clear on what the results mean for each student. These are just a few of the questions that are likely to surface as the PARCC score reports are released.

- How do I read the report?
- What type of score reports do educators and the school get?
- How will the school use the test results to make sure improvements are made?

That doesn't mean NJ students are not doing as well as they did before— it just means the expectations are higher.

The Department of Education, PARCC and many other professional education organizations, such as Achieve.org and National PTA, have websites with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) where many answers to parents' questions are available. The FAQs address national and state questions. However, most importantly, local educators, parents, policy makers, students and business leaders need to share ideas and information for the benefit of all students.

The materials developed within the NJ PASS toolkits can kick-start that important partnership work. Primary resources for PARCC information and supportive communication are the following:

NJDOE: <http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/PARCCFAQ.pdf>

PARCC: <http://parconline.org/about/faqs>

Achieve.org: http://www.achieve.org/files/Achieve_FAQ.pdf

National PTA: <http://www.pta.org/assessments>

When used to help identify individual student strengths and weaknesses, the results of this year's PARCC exam will have great value.

Using student testing in the past, it was not possible to reflect on the success of particular instructional and curricular programs. Using previous state tests educators could only engage in basic and limited conversations:

- How did our district/school do compared to others in New Jersey?
- Which students need further support?
- How are our various subgroups performing?

PARCC data can be used to drive more meaningful conversations around students' demonstration of learning, academic standards, instructional improvements and parent engagement in student learning:

- What are each individual student's strengths and weaknesses and how can we help him or her grow?
- Which standards did our individual students meet?
- What professional support could be of benefit to our district/school?
- How aligned are our curriculum and instructional practices to state standards?
- How can we support individual teachers and identify best practice in the district?
- How can we best work as a parent/teacher/school partnership to support the individual child?

Learning builds from grade-level to grade-level and the annual state tests expect that students' performance will include concepts that were learned over several years.

PARCC looks at effective teaching practices and mirrors them in the assessments. The questions that students find on the PARCC state test look like assignments teachers in effective classrooms give their students every day. So, there is not anything unusual, overwhelming, or special that students need to do in order to do their best on the test as instruction should be aligned to the standards.

The PARCC score reports are intended go well beyond typical assessment score reports for three reasons:

- 1) The reports are focused on the critical questions that parents, teachers, school leaders and policy-makers ask about the results to inform their efforts to improve student learning.
- 2) The reports are based on data visualizations that will raise the bar for data presentation as parents and educators develop stronger partnerships focused specifically on student learning and achievement.
- 3) The reports are intended to have an impact at the school, district and state levels, informing efforts across states to transform reporting to parents and educators.

In order to best support their child, parents need access to more helpful information to understand student progress toward and beyond college and career readiness.

Along with the [PASS toolkits](#), several professional education organizations such as NJDOE, Achieve.org and PARCC have produced sample informational materials for use by school districts as they communicate with parents and their unique communities.

Educators have been encouraged to edit and modify the communication documents for local needs, such as those in the state's home/school partnership model, [Parent Academies for Student Success \(PASS\)](#). If parents feel that their questions or concerns are unclear or have not been met, they should contact their child's school and district leaders who will have or find the answers that parents need in order to be clear about the benefits of understanding their child's ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

Student score results and other information are highly protected and not shared any differently from in the past

Schools get the information educators need to make decisions about instruction. No student-specific information is shared with outside groups or the federal government. States maintain control over what is done with student information.

Sample score reports for review and discussion

This document contains sample score reports to inform conversations between parents and educators. One of the pillars of NJ's PASS model is transparency; therefore, a sample report designed for teachers and a sample report for schools are both included in this packet.

As parents and educators review student score reports and build partnerships to support student learning, it is important to remember that this completion of the first administration of the PARCC assessment is hardly the end of the work. We now have key information to increase the quality and quantity of the support that is provided to our children.

Setting Performance Level Descriptors for the PARCC Assessment

Late this fall, the parents and teachers of every student who participated in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test will receive a **score report**. The score report presents an overview of a student's subject-level performance in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, as well as an overall score. The overall score will determine the student's **performance level**. There are five performance levels, with the top two indicating a strong grasp of grade-level standards and readiness for the next step in a student's educational development.

Level 1: Did not yet meet expectations

Level 2: Partially met expectations

Level 3: Approached expectations

Level 4: Met expectations

Level 5: Exceeded expectations

After the first administration of PARCC, educators and content area experts met to determine the scores that students must earn on the assessment in order to achieve a particular performance level. This process is called performance level setting. Performance levels will help students, parents, teachers and policymakers understand how students are performing toward the content standards for college and career readiness.

How Does the Performance Level Setting Process Work?

- Early on, PARCC states adopted detailed “descriptors” for each performance level ([view the levels here](#)). Performance Level Descriptors describe the knowledge and skills students can typically show at each grade level.
- Over 240 teachers, postsecondary educators, and content area experts met in small groups to review the 21 grade-level PARCC tests in English language arts/literacy and mathematics.
- Panelists will use the Performance Level Descriptors, actual test results and research studies to recommend the “cut scores” – the scores that mark the threshold of performance from one level to the next. When reviewing each question, panelists will ask themselves, “Should a student performing at a certain level be expected to answer this particular question wholly, partially, or not at all?” Each group will go through at least three rounds of review per assessment.
- In order to have the performance level cut scores align from grade to grade, panels will review and recommend cut scores for the high school assessments first in late July 2015. Panels will then recommend scores for grades 3-8, starting with middle school and working their way down to grade 3.
- The determinations of these groups will then be reviewed and voted on by the education chiefs for K-12 (and for higher education, for the high school cut scores) in each of the PARCC states.
- This process ensures that the score thresholds set for each performance level are reviewed and approved by a wide variety of stakeholders and experts and reflect the consensus of their best judgments.

Who is Responsible for Performance Level Setting?

States nominated a variety of stakeholders to participate in 12 in-person panels representing each grade level and subject area. Those participating in the process include:

- K-12 educators
- Educators who serve students with disabilities
- Educators who teach English language learners
- College faculty
- State education experts

Parent Guide to the PARCC Score Report

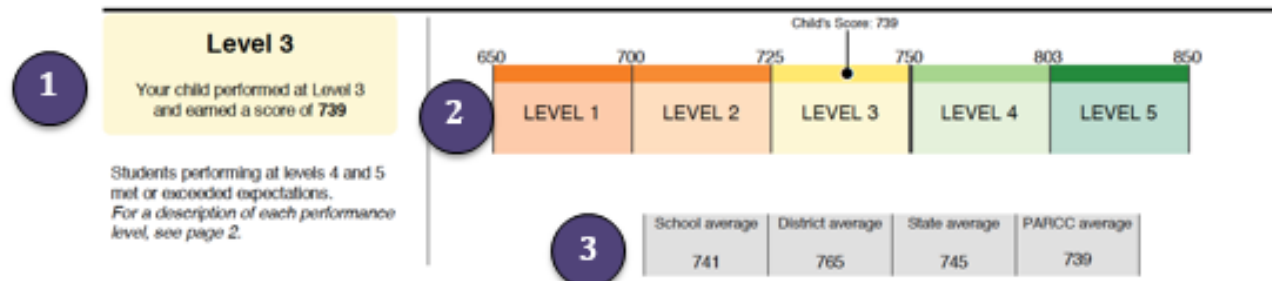
PARCC

The First PARCC Parent Score Report

The PARCC tests measure whether students are meeting new, higher academic standards and mastering the knowledge and skills they need to progress in their K-12 education and beyond. They test more complex skills like critical-thinking, persuasive writing, and problem-solving – skills that were not measured on previous state tests. Scores may look different and lower on this new test. That does not mean students are learning less, it means the tests have changed and are asking students to meet a higher bar.

Score reports for the first year of the PARCC test are coming out in the fall. This is a transition year and extra time was required to set the threshold scores and prepare the first score reports. Performance levels, the levels that indicate how well students met grade level expectations, and the score ranges that make up each of the five levels, had to be established based on actual student results. Next year, the results will come much sooner – close to the end of the school year. Parents receive two reports for each child – one for the English language arts/literacy test and one for mathematics.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY PERFORMANCE



Key Information Provided in the Score Report

1

Overall Student Performance – This section of the report shows your student's overall numerical score and the performance level achieved based on that score. Level 1 indicates a student is not yet meeting grade level expectations and Level 5 indicates the student has a strong understanding of grade level material.

Page two of the score report provides additional information about your child's score and level of performance. Level 4 and above indicates that a student meets or exceeds grade level expectations and is well prepared for the next grade level.

2

Score Graph – The colored graph shows the score ranges for each performance level and where your child's score falls within that range. This gives you an indication of how close your child is to achieving the next level.

3

Score Comparisons: Unlike many previous state test score reports, PARCC score reports show how your student is performing compared to students in the same grade at the same school, across the school district, around the state, and across the states administering the PARCC test.

Additional Resources:

- For more information about the PARCC score report and to view sample test questions, visit understandthescore.org.
- To learn more about grade level expectations, view the PTA's Parents' Guide to Student Success at pta.org/parents/.
- For tips and tools to help your child succeed in school, visit belearninghero.org.

Parent Guide to the PARCC Score Report

READING

4

Reading score range:
10 to 90
Your child's score:
44

Average of students just meeting expectations	School average
50	52
District average	State average
48	45

WRITING

Writing score range:
10 to 60
Your child's score:
30

Average of students just meeting expectations	School average
35	39
District average	State average
35	31

4

Reading and Writing Performance – The report for the English language arts test will show your student's overall performance in two main sub-categories: reading and writing. It will show your child's numerical score for a sub-set of questions in those categories. This section includes the average reading and writing scores of students who achieved an overall performance of Level 4 on the test, as well as average scores for the school, district, and state.

LITERARY TEXT

5



In this area, your child did not do as well as students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by showing they can read and analyze grade appropriate fiction, drama and poetry.

INFORMATIONAL TEXT



In this area, your child did almost as well as students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by showing they can read and analyze grade-appropriate non-fiction, including texts about history, science, art, and music.

VOCABULARY



In this area, your child did as well as or better than students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by showing they can use context to determine what words and phrases mean in grade-appropriate texts.

WRITING EXPRESSION



In this area, your child did not do as well as students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by showing they can compose well-developed, organized, and clear writing, using details from what they have read.

KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS



In this area, your child did as well as or better than students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by showing they can compose writing using the rules of standard English, including those for grammar, spelling, and usage.

LEGEND



Below Expectations



Nearly Meets Expectations



Meets or Exceeds Expectations

To see selected questions from the test visit, understandthescore.org.

5

Detailed Breakdowns – The score report also provides information about your child's performance on specific skills within English language arts, so you can see where your student is excelling or needs additional support. Each area includes a description of the skills needed to demonstrate a clear understanding of grade-level standards.

6

Explanatory Icons – This is a guide to the icons used above, so you can quickly see how your child's performance in each area of the test compares with that of students who met grade level expectations.

What now? How the PARCC score report can be used to enhance your child's education:

- Schools and districts can use the report information to better plan instruction, support, and enrichment for students.
- Teachers can use this information to personalize instruction to meet individual student needs.
- Parents can use this information to understand their child's needs and strengths and work with their teachers and school to support their child at home. Find resources at UnderstandTheScore.org
- It is important to have regular check-ins with teachers to help ensure your child is learning the skills necessary to remain on track.



MATHEMATICS

Algebra II Assessment Report, 2014–2015

This report provides information about how your child performed on the PARCC mathematics assessment. It shows whether your child met grade-level expectations and if your child is on track for college and careers.

This test is just one measure of how well your child is performing academically. Other information, such as grades, teacher feedback and scores on other tests will help determine your child's academic strengths and needs.

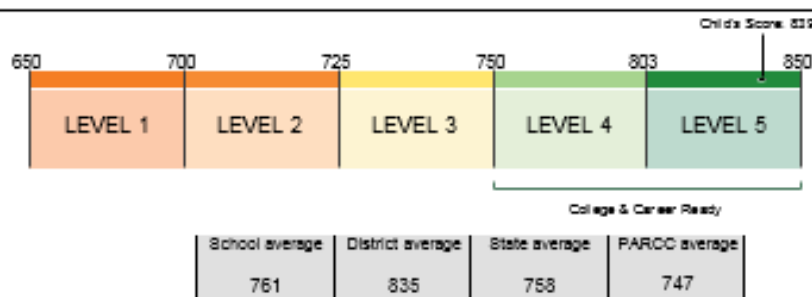
To learn more about the test, and to view sample questions and practice tests, visit understandthescore.org.

MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE

Level 5

Your child performed at Level 5 and earned a score of 839

Students performing at levels 4 and 5 met or exceeded expectations. For a description of each performance level, see page 2.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S MATHEMATICS SCORE

MAJOR CONTENT

1' In this area, your child did as well as or better than students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by solving problems involving rational exponents, writing and interpreting algebraic expressions, rational and radical equations, graphs of functions, creating linear, quadratic, and exponential functions, and making inferences and justifying conclusions from data.

EXPRESSING MATHEMATICAL REASONING

1' In this area, your child did as well as or better than students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by creating and justifying logical mathematical solutions and analyzing and correcting the reasoning of others.

ADDITIONAL & SUPPORTING CONTENT

0.7 In this area, your child did almost as well as students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by solving problems involving the complex number system, rational expressions and functions, systems of equations, trigonometric functions, interpreting data, and probability.

MODELING & APPLICATION

1' In this area, your child did as well as or better than students who met the expectations.

Students meet expectations by solving real-world problems, representing and solving problems with symbols, reasoning quantitatively and strategically using appropriate tools.

For a list of the major and additional content at each grade level, see parconline.org/math.

LEGEND

-1 Below Expectations **0.7** Nearly Meets Expectations **1'** Meets or Exceeds Expectations

To see selected questions from the test, visit understandthescore.org.



MATHEMATICS

Algebra II Assessment Report, 2014–2015

HOW CAN I USE THIS REPORT TO HELP MY CHILD?

Use the report to start a discussion with your child's teacher(s) about his/her academic strengths and areas for improvement. You could ask:

- What can we do at home, in class and at school to help continue building my child's knowledge and skills in areas where he/she exceeds the expectations?
- What can we do at home, in class and at school to help support my child, where the expectations of the grade level were not met?

What are the PARCC tests? The tests measure how well students have learned grade-level material in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Students who meet or exceed expectations are on track for the next grade level and, ultimately, for college and careers. The tests include questions that measure your child's fundamental skills and knowledge, and require students to think critically, solve problems and support or explain their answers. The test is one of several ways to help parents and teachers understand how well children are learning.

What do the performance levels mean? The performance levels listed below describe how well students met the academic expectations for their grade level.

- Level 1: Did not yet meet expectations
- Level 2: Partially met expectations
- Level 3: Approached expectations
- Level 4: Met expectations
- Level 5: Exceeded expectations

How do the test scores this year compare to those in past years? The knowledge and skills tested this year are different - and in some cases more rigorous - than in the past. If your child's score is different than you expected, meet with your child's teacher to understand what that means and how you can help your child improve his or her performance.

How will my child's school use the test results? Results from the test give your child's teacher information about his/her academic performance. The results also give your school and school district important information to make improvements to the education program and to teaching.

How can I use the mathematics scores? The best way to make sense of these scores is to compare them to the average for students who met the expectations and the average for students in your child's school, district, and state. Also, look at the information below the scores. How is your child doing in each area of mathematics? Ask your child's teacher how you can give your child more opportunities to be challenged and how you can support his/her academic needs.

Probable range. The probable range in the score on this test is plus or minus 3 points. This is the amount of change that would be expected in your child's score if he/she were to take the test many times. Small differences in scores should not be over interpreted.

For information and resources, including sample PARCC test questions and the PTA's Guide to Student Success, visit understandthescore.org.

Resources of sample parent score reports with explanations of each:

Achieve.org Sample Packet – PARCC Score Reports 2015

- 1) [Achieve Sample Parent ELA Report Grade 5](#)
- 2) [Achieve Sample Parent ELA Report Grade 8](#)
- 3) [Achieve Sample Parent ELA Report Grade 11](#)
- 4) [Achieve Sample Parent Math Report Grade 5](#)
- 5) [Achieve Sample Parent Math Report Grade 8](#)
- 6) [Achieve Sample Parent Algebra 2 Report](#)
- 7) [Achieve Sample Educator ELA Report Grade 8](#)
- 8) [Achieve Sample School ELA Report Douglas Middle School](#)
- 9) [Achieve Sample Parent Flyer for PARCC Score Reports](#)
- 10) [Achieve Sample Communications Materials](#)

PARCC Sample Packet – PARCC Score Reports 2015

1. PARCC Sample [English language arts/literacy mock score report](#)
2. PARCC Sample [Mathematics Mock Score Report](#)
3. PARCC Sample [Understanding Your Child’s Test Results at understandthescore.org](#)
4. PARCC Sample [Score Report Guide](#)
5. PARCC Sample [Be a Learning Hero](#) Tools to help your child
6. PARCC Sample [Parent Guide to the Score Report](#)

*The New Jersey Department of Education’s model for home/school partnerships – **The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)** provides documents and support tools intended to complement information about the state’s academic standards and annual assessments for students. The PASS model provides resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to build home/school partnerships in the best interest of students’ academic success. For information on the NJDOE PASS model go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Please send questions to: informccss@doe.state.nj.us.*